

December 14, 2007

State Unveils New Standardized Hazards Reporting System; Collaborative Effort Will Make Status Easier to Understand

Indiana is unveiling a new standardized system to report conditions across the state and keep Hoosiers safer during severe weather and other hazardous situations.

Situations could include fires, floods, utility failures, major accidents, public health emergencies, thunderstorms, acts of terrorism, tornadoes and snowstorms.

“Under the previous system, there was a large variation in reporting standards which resulted in confusion for the media, general public and emergency personnel,” said Greg Dhaene, director of the Indiana Department of Homeland Security Response and Recovery Division. “Standards in many of the state’s 92 counties were different, which made it difficult to decipher the reported conditions throughout the state, or in some cases, between neighboring counties.”

This new system is a collaborative effort among Indiana Department of Homeland Security, members of the Emergency Management Alliance of Indiana Board, numerous county emergency management directors and the Indianapolis Office of the National Weather Service.

Local authority remains with each county. The county emergency management directors will assess, determine and report the local conditions at the level they deem most appropriate. If a local emergency is declared, the county commissioners still retain the authority to determine the type of restrictions that will be drafted into the local declaration.

The process to develop a state-wide standardized system was initiated shortly after a storm in February, 2007.

J. Eric Dietz, director of IDHS, lauded the efforts of the organizations and agencies to develop this system so quickly. “Creating and implementing a new system across an entire state is a great accomplishment,” Dietz said. “To bring a streamlined, easier to understand structure like this to fruition so rapidly is important, and ultimately will lead to greater efficiency, increased public awareness and most importantly, an increase in the personal safety of more than 6 million Indiana residents.”

The new reporting system includes:

- A graphical depiction of one statewide map system that can be easily read and interpreted.
- A system that is flexible and includes an all hazards application.
- The system allows for an emergency declaration on the state or local level.
- The map can easily be posted to a website with links to display state or county declaration documents that will be archived. This feature should limit post-incident

inquiries regarding the time and date of declaration and time and date the declaration was rescinded.

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Media Contacts

John Erickson

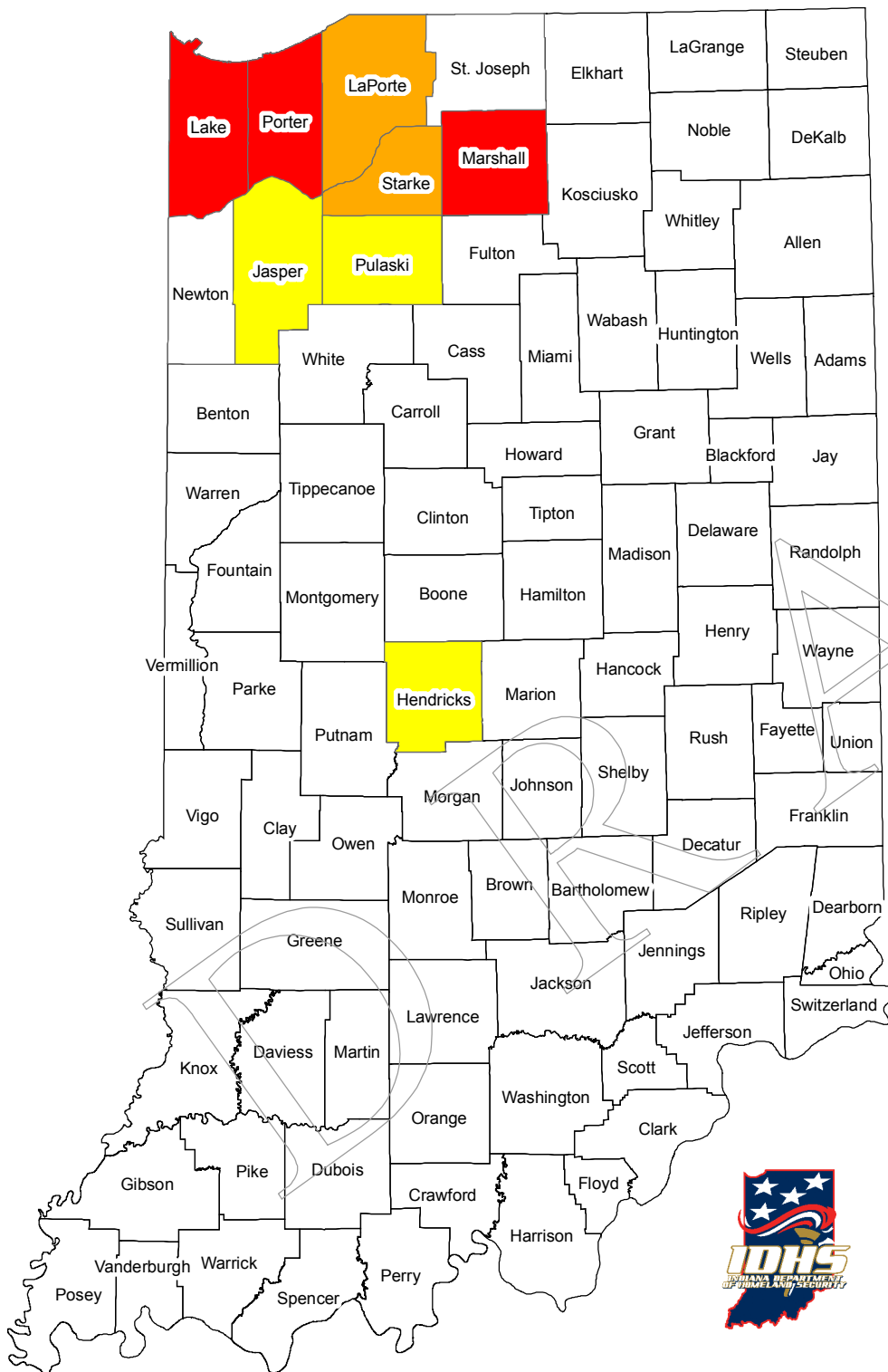
IDHS Senior Public Information Officer

317-234-4214

Pam Bright

IDHS Communications Director

317-232-6632



Indiana Department of Homeland Security Winter Weather Event

County Status Update for __/__/__ at 00:00

LEVEL 1 - Declared Emergency

A State of Emergency has been declared by the County Commissioners. Travel may be restricted to emergency personnel **ONLY!** Further restrictions may be included in the declaration.

LEVEL 2 - Warning

Conditions are threatening to the safety of the public. Only essential travel is recommended (i.e. to and from work, emergency situations, etc.). Emergency action plans have been or should be implemented by businesses, schools, government agencies and other organizations.

LEVEL 3 - Watch

Routine travel or activities may be restricted in areas because of a hazardous situation; citizens should use caution or avoid these areas. Schools and businesses may begin to implement their emergency action plans.

Caution

A condition may develop that limits or hinders travel or activities in isolated areas. No travel restrictions have been reported but citizens should be alert to changing conditions.